

Pedestrian Accessibility Summary- 2/2007 (to use for local projects too)

Pedestrian facility design must comply with accessibility standards in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. ADA was written as civil rights legislation and involves several federal agencies for coordination and implementation. ADA requirements apply to **all** projects involving new or altered pedestrian facilities, not just projects funded by state or federal sources. There are several key ADA-related reference sources to use when designing pedestrian facilities. These are included below. It may be necessary for a project sponsor to refer to more than one listed resource or to use a more recent standard or guide. Updated resource materials can be found on the U.S. Access Board's website at <http://www.access-board.gov/>.

The U.S. Access Board has drafted standards which act as interim guidance for pedestrian facilities *within* the public right-of-way (See PROWAC at <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/draft.htm>). Just as importantly, some standards that have already been approved for building sites (curb ramps, accessible routes, ground and floor surfaces, and bus stops and shelters) and are already contained in the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). These have a higher standing since they are already approved by federal agencies as final standards and need to be followed for pedestrian facilities in the public right of way. These are also featured as a subset of the drafted standards contained in the PROWAC guides. Since the PROWAC guidance has been recently revised and includes the latest ADAAG requirements for these facilities, it may be easier to just follow PROWAC guidance.

Path/trail projects are also considered pedestrian facilities since they serve pedestrians. Path/trail projects funded by state or federal sources must also comply with the Wisconsin DOT (WisDOT) Bicycle Facility Design Handbook if they are considered a bikeway.

Featured below are major pedestrian facility types with a summary of the ADA compliance needs and sources of key requirements or guidance. This is NOT a complete list of pedestrian facility features addressed by ADA, nor is it a comprehensive list of resources. Where appropriate, it is noted where a WisDOT standard already exceeds the minimum ADA requirement or an ADA requirement has already been incorporated into WisDOT standards.

Curb Ramps and Domes – According to the WisDOT Facilities Development Manual (WisDOT FDM), for state and federal projects, the standard width of ramps is 5 feet wide and the maximum grade is 8.3% (the ADA minimum width is 4'). All new and altered intersections shall include truncated domes (now the only permitted detectable warning field). Ramps need to have a minimum 4' by 4' landing at the top, which is not to exceed a 2% slope in any one direction. The WisDOT FDM section includes the ADA requirements, but also contains a Wisconsin state law related to curb ramps. See <http://roadwaystandards.dot.wi.gov/standards/fdm/11/11-25-30.pdf>.

Sidewalks and Driveways – For state and federally-funded projects, the standard width of a sidewalk is 5 feet. Text is provided under WisDOT FDM 11-25-1. For ADA purposes, the minimum continuous and unobstructed clear width of a "pedestrian accessible route" (sidewalk) is one foot narrower than the WisDOT standard width sidewalk. However, whenever a sidewalk is built between four and five feet wide, passing spaces need to be provided every 200'. The maximum cross-slope of a sidewalk is 2%. To adequately drain a sidewalk, the maximum cross-slope is often used, but should not be exceeded.

The maximum running slope of a sidewalk is 5 percent to meet the American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) where terrain conditions permit. It may not be possible to limit the sidewalk grade to 5 percent. Consider rest intervals periodically where the 5 percent grade cannot be met, but the grade does not exceed 8.3%. The slope of the rest interval should not exceed 2 percent and should be at least 5 foot by 5 foot. The running grade must be limited to 8.33 % **unless** the adjacent street exceeds

8.3%. Do not exceed the street grade where the street grade exceeds 8.33 percent (page 12 of FDM 11-20-1 <http://roadwaystandards.dot.wi.gov/standards/fdm/11/FDM11.pdf> and R301 of PROWAC).

The maximum cross-slope of a sidewalk that crosses a driveway is 2% and must be at least 3.5' wide across the driveway, see 403.3 of ADAAG. When cross slopes exceed 2%, pedestrians may be caught off guard, which is especially troubling for people using canes, crutches or wheelchairs.

Sidewalk Surfaces – According to ADAAG 303 (Changes in Level) <http://www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.htm#BLOCKS> and PROWAC R301.5.2 sidewalks surfaces must be firm, stable and slip resistant and sidewalk faults limited to ¼". Anything between ¼" and ½" can be beveled without being ramped . Anything over ½' must be ramped up to at a maximum of 8.3 percent. .

Paths/Trails – Accessibility standards apply to those trails that are designed and constructed for pedestrian use. These include all trails that are funded as shared-use, transportation facilities (trails primarily designed and constructed for recreational use by equestrians, mountain bicyclists, snowmobile users, or off-highway vehicle users, even if pedestrians may occasionally use the same trails, do not have to comply with these same ADA requirements). If a trail functions more as a sidewalk because of its location, the places it serves, or predominance of pedestrian use, it should be designed as a sidewalk using the public rights-of-way guidance (PROWAC). All other trails, even those located within a highway right-of-way, can comply with the Outdoor Developed Areas Report (ODAR) guidance at <http://www.access-board.gov/outdoor/outdoor-rec-rpt.htm>. The ODAR guidance is less restrictive than the PROWAC guidance.

Generally, the maximum running grade of a trail is 5%, but this can be exceeded for short distances, see 16.2.7 of ODAR. However, all crossings of streets and highways, including trails supported by structure, must comply with the same grade requirements as used for ramps found in R406 of PROW. The PROW requirements exceed those found in ODAR and are consistent with ADAAG. At-grade crossings of trails must have ramps and be treated with truncated domes as the only permitted detectable warning.

Crossings – Marked crosswalks should be 6 feet wide in accordance to PROWAC and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Medians are also very beneficial to pedestrians since they reduce crossing exposure and allow pedestrians to negotiate traffic one direction at a time. Preferably, medians should be curbed. If either a full or partial cut is provided, the median should be at least 6 feet long and 5 feet wide. Truncated domes must be provided in the median as well as the corners.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) – APS includes audible tones and speech messages that provide standard information about the status of the signal cycle (WALK, DON'T WALK). Information on the location, direction of travel, and the name of the street to be crossed is sometimes also included. APS units are recommended in PROWAC whenever pedestrian signal systems are added or altered at intersections (see R306 of <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/draft.htm#306> and <http://www.walkinginfo.org/aps/home.cfm> for more comprehensive information). For the past 25 years, APS units have been provided at certain intersections after people who are sight impaired requested them. However, as it stands today, the incorporation of APS for all new and altered signal systems (with pedestrian indicators) will become required upon the final approval of the PROWAC (in its present form) by the Access Board and FHWA.

The Federal Highway Administration has a role in ensuring compliance of accessibility requirements. That role is clarified in this memo: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/civilrights/ada_memo_clarificationa.htm. Another agency charged with responsibility of ensuring compliance of ADA is the Department of Justice. They maintain a website at <http://www.ada.gov>. They also have a toolbox for encouraging local government action at <http://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/toolkitmain.htm>.